

FEAR

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™



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ADVENTURE INTO FEAR™
THE MAN CALLED **MORBIUS**™

THE LIVING VAMPIRE™

YOU ALWAYS
KILL
THE ONE
YOU LOVE!



Once Michael Morbius was a world-renowned bio-chemist, dying of an unknown blood disease—and desperately searching for a CURE. He found that cure—but, in turn, it afflicted him with a CURSE far worse than any possible disease; the curse of the blood-sucking night-beast; the curse of...THE LIVING VAMPIRE!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MAN CALLED **MORBIUS!**™

DOUG
MOENCH
SCRIPT

STEVE
GERBER
PLOT

FRANK
ROBBINS
ART

FRANK
GIAOIA
INKING

LINDA LESSMANN, COLORING
ARTIE SIMEK, LETTERING

ROY
THOMAS
EDITOR

DAY HAS FALLEN IN
TWILIT FLAME, LIKE
AN ANGEL FROM ON
HIGH... AND NOW IT
IS NIGHT WHICH HOLDS
DARK SWAY OVER THE
HEAVENS...

...NIGHT WHICH WRAPS
THE SEAMY CITY IN
A SHEATH OF SLIDING
SHADOW AND SOFT
SLUMBER...

...AND NIGHT WHICH
PROVIDES A HAVEN
OF SOLACE FOR THOSE
WHO SPURN THE HARSH
LIGHT OF DAY...

MORBIUS FALLS IN THAT
CATEGORY... MORBIUS, THE
GHASTLY LIVING VAMPIRE,
WHO NOW POISES HIS SUPPLE
BODY FOR A SKIMMING GLIDE
ABOVE SOMBER LOS ANGELES
ROOFTOPS... MORBIUS, WHO
IS BROTHER TO THE NIGHT...

AND
WHAT
OF A
VAMPIRE'S
BLOOD...?

BUT EVEN BEYOND THE VEIL
OF HARSH SUNLIGHT, MORBIUS
KNOWS HE WILL FIND NO
SOLACE THIS NIGHT. FOR, EVEN
THOUGH HE IS A MARIAN FROM
THE RANKS OF THE TRUE LIVING,
AND CURSED TO FEED
UPON LIFE'S BLOOD, HE STILL
CARES ABOUT LIFE...

...AND IS AWARE THAT TONIGHT MAY WELL
SERVE AS A PRELUDE TO ARMAGEDDON.



HE PAUSES NOW, CONTEMPLATING A COURSE OF ACTION, HOW TO AVERT THE END OF A WORLD? THEN, HIS MIND AWASH WITH A TURMOIL OF THOUGHT AND MEMORY, HE RECALLS THE COMPONENTS OF DAWNING ARMAGEDDON...



THE CARETAKERS, TEN-THOUSAND-YEAR-OLD EMISSARIES FROM THE STAR-SYSTEM ARCTURIUS... THEY WHO HAD INTRODUCED INTELLIGENCE TO OUR REMOTE CAVE-DWELLING ANCESTORS...

...AND WHO NOW HOPE TO STAVE OFF THE DECAY OF EARTH'S MYRIAD SOCIETIES BY CREATING GENETICALLY SUPERIOR BEINGS CALLED "THE CHILDREN OF THE COMET"...



THE DEMON-PRIEST DABMOND, SWORN ENEMY OF THE CARETAKERS, WHO BELIEVES EARTH'S SALVATION LIES ALONG A SUPERNATURAL PATH... WHO HAS SORCEROUSLY ENTHRALLED MARTINE, MORBIUS' FORMER FIANCEE...



...AND WHO IS CAPABLE OF SUMMONING NIGHTMARISH Pawns LIKE THE CAT-DEMON BALKATAR...



...CAT DEMONS THAT ARE THE BIOLOGICALLY MUTATED INHABITANTS OF ARCTURIUS, DESCENDENTS OF THE CARETAKERS, BEINGS WHO HAVE LOST THE VERY WILL TO LIVE... AND LIVING WARNING OF WHAT MIGHT RESULT FROM THE CARETAKER'S PRESENT GENETIC EXPERIMENTS...



AND FINALLY... BLADE, THE BLACK VAMPIRE-SLAYER, HE WHO INTERRUPTED MORBIUS' DESPERATE ATTEMPTS TO REACH THE CARETAKERS AND APPRISE THEM OF THE ERROR OF THEIR WAYS...

IT OCCURS TO HIM SUDDENLY, AND WITH A CHILL OF DREAD, THAT EACH OF THEM --EACH COMPONENT OF IMMINENT DISASTER--HAD IN HIS OWN WAY SOUGHT ONLY TO PERFORM ACTS OF GOOD...

HOW, THEN, SHALL MORBIUS ACT? WHAT MUST HE DO...?

A SOFT
SOUND
FROM
BEHIND...

...AND THE CHOICE
IS TORN FROM
HIM...

...HIS COURSE OF ACTION SHOCK-
INGLY DICTATED BY...

LARA, THE INNOCENT GIRL-
CHILD WHOM MORBIUS HAD
ALMOST SLAIN IN THE THROES
OF HIS DEPRAVED THIRST...
AND WHO BEARS AN UNKNOWN
RELATIONSHIP TO THE
CARETAKERS...

HALT,
MORBIUS...

I WARN
YOU-- DO NOT
HARM ME...
UNLESS YOU
WISH TO TEST
MY POWER AS
BEFORE.**

IT IS BETTER TO COME
WITH ME TO THE
CARETAKERS, QUICKLY
AND QUIETLY... FOR
AN ALL-OUT WAR
BETWEEN THEM AND
DAEMON IS ABOUT
TO ERUPT.

THEN LEAD THE
WAY, GIRL. I
HAVE MY OWN
REASONS FOR
SEEKING THE
CARETAKERS.

*SEE FEAR #21. *DITTO. --ROY.

BUT BEFORE MORBIUS CAN
TAKE THE CHILD'S HAND...

IT'S TOO LATE--!

--HELLISH
POWER
SPURTS
FROM THE
SKIES.

HE'S
FOUND
US!!

MORBIUS IS MOMENTARILY
BLINDED BY THE BOLT OF
CORUSCATING FORCE... AND
WHEN SIGHT AGAIN
RETURNS...

...HE GAZES IN STARK
DISELIEF UPON THE
IMPOSSIBLE VISAGE OF...

--THE ARCAINE
SORCEROR
DAEMON.

YOU ARE A **TRAITOR**, MORBIUS--
ONE WHO IS DAMNED TO LEARN
THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FAR
MORE PRUDENT TO **REMAIN** IN
MY SERVICE...

...FOR THE CHILD
SPOKE IN **TRUTH**.
IT IS TOO LATE--!
THE WAR HAS
ALREADY **BEGUN**--

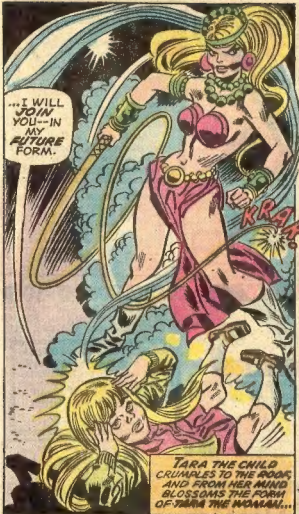
--AND YOU
SHALL
BECOME
ITS **FIRST**
CASUALTIES!!

SLAY THEM, MY
CHILDREN OF THE
DARK PORTALS!! SLAY
THEM IN THE NAME
OF **DAEMON**--IN
THE NAME OF **LIFE!!**

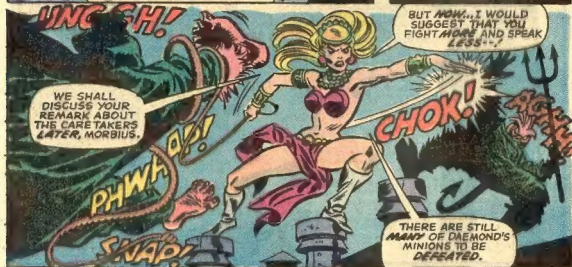
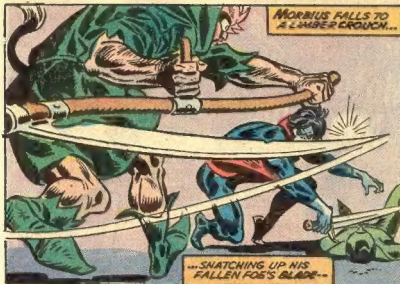
DEMONS... SWARMING
UP THE SIDE OF THE
BUILDING... SURROUNDING
US--!

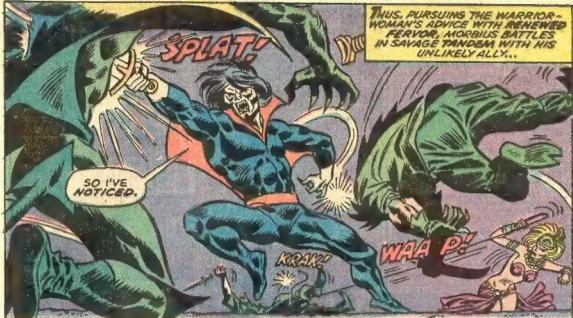
TOO
MANY...
FOR ME
TO FIGHT
ALONE--!

YOU WON'T FIGHT
ALONE, MORBIUS...



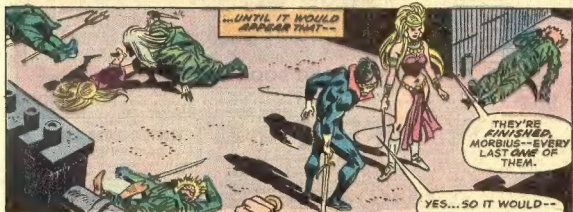
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THUS, PURSUING THE WARRIOR-WOMAN'S ADVICE WITH RENEWED FERVOR, MORBIUS BATTLES IN SAVAGE TANDUM WITH HIS UNLIKELY ALLY...

SO I'VE NOTICED.



...UNTIL IT WOULD APPEAR THAT--

THEY'RE FINISHED, MORBIUS--EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM.

YES... SO IT WOULD--



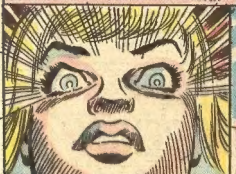
NOW, FILTHY LITTLE PUPPET OF THE CARTAGNIANS... YOUR DISGUSTING HEART WILL EMBRACE MY DAGGER!!

NO!! THAT VOICE--IT'S MARTINE!!

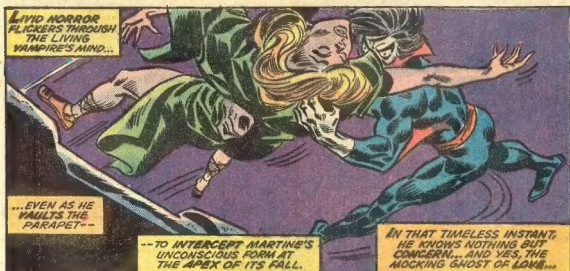
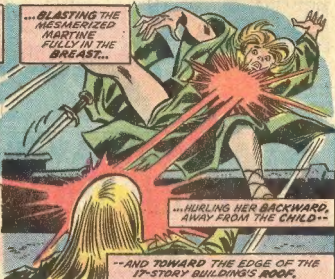
MORBIUS' ANGUISHED VOICE BAWLS ACROSS THE WINDSWEEPED ROOFTOP, AND...



HIS VOICE FALTERS, THEN, AS TARA THE CHILD SPASMS TO LIFE, DISTANTLY, MORBIUS IS AWARE THAT THE HARBOR-WOMAN SIMULTANEOUSLY VANISHES IN A SWIRL OF DISSIPATING MIST...



AND THEN HIS ATTENTION IS RIVETED TO THE CHILD, AS BEAMS OF RAW PSYCHOKINETIC ENERGY LEAP FROM HER DISTENDED EYES...



BUT AS HE RETURNS HER TO
SAFETY, AND GAZES DOWN
AT HER STILL FACE...

...AT THE DELICATE HAIR
OF HER GENTLY PULSING
THROAT

...HE IS OVERCOME BY THE
IMPLACABLE BLOODLUST...

...AND, GOD HELP
HIM, HE SUCCEUMBS.

HE DRINKS, HIS BARBED
FANGS SUNK DEEPLY IN
HELLISH RAPTURE...

...AND HE DROWNS IN
CRIMSON MEMORY.

NOBEL PEACE
PRIZE AWARDS

SCARLET-
DRENCHED
VISIONS OF
MARTINE...

THE DAY SHE ACCOM-
PANIED HIM TO ACCEPT
HIS NOBEL AWARD...

THE DAY SHE INSISTED ON
JOINING HIM AT SEA, UN-
AWARE OF HIS ATTEMPTS AT
CURING HIMSELF OF A
RARE BLOOD DISEASE...

AND THE
DAY HE
FAILED
IN HIS
ATTEMPT,
AND
BECAME
A LIVING
VAMPIRE
WHO
DESPERATELY
FLUNG
HIMSELF
FROM THAT
SHIP,
VOWING TO
SPARE HER
THE TOUCH
OF HIS--

--FANGS.

THE VISIONS SHRED
NOW...

LEAVING ONLY THE BITTER TASTE OF BLOOD.

BLOOD AND SUPREME
REMORSE

NOOOO!
WHAT HAVE
I DONE...

CONTROL
YOURSELF,
MORBIUS!

HER PULSE IS
STILL STRONG.

SHE'LL
LIVE...

MORBIUS, YOU'VE
BEEN DECEIVED.
DAEMON'S POWER
HAS ONLY BEGUN
TO BUILD.

THE ACT OF
KILLING... HE WERE
SACRIFICES. HE
WANTED TO
KILL THEM... SO HE
COULD INCREASE
HIS POWER.

SO HE COULD
FEED ON THEIR
DEATHS...
SO HE COULD

COME ON,
MORBIUS-- SHE'S
PASSED OUT.

AND WE'VE
GOT TO HURRY
IF WHAT SHE
SAID IS TRUE.

LEAVE HER-- SHE'LL
BE SAFE HERE...

NO!

I ABHOR THE CARETAKERS
AS MUCH AS I LOATHE
DAEMON!

GO TO THEM IF YOU
WANT-- I WON'T
STOP YOU

BUT I'M
STAYING
HERE

WITH
MARTINE.

THEN THIS IS
THE PROOF,
BROTHERS...

THE ONE CALLED MORBIUS IS NO LONGER WORTHY OF OUR TRUST.

AND EVERY MOMENT WE HAVE HESITATED, Hoping HE WOULD REAFFIRM HIS ALLEGIANCE TO US, HAS BEEN A MOMENT JEOPARDIZING THE SUCCESS OF PROJECT SECOND GENESIS!

I CONCUR. DAEMON MUST NOT ABORT OUR CREATION OF "THE CHILDREN OF THE COMET."

EARTH'S PROLONGED FUTURE IS CONTINGENT UPON THE INFILTRATION OF GENETICALLY SUPERIOR BEINGS.

DAEMON MUST DIE. AND SINCE MORBIUS NO LONGER AIDS US--

--WE MUST MOUNT AN INDEPENDENT, FULL-SCALE OFFENSIVE!

AT ONCE!!

AT ONCE, SIR

THEN, IN ORDERED SINGLE FILE, THE UNIFORMED AGENTS OF THE CARE-TAKERS MARCH FROM THE CLIFFSIDE HEADQUARTERS...

...ACTIVATE MINIATURE JET-PACKS--

--AND STREAK INTO THE SKY.

THEIR MISSION: DEATH, IN THE MISGUIDED CAUSE OF LIFE.

--GLAD YOU CHANGED YOUR MIND, MORBIUS--BECAUSE YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG ABOUT THE CARETAKERS.

THEY ONLY WANT TO HELP THE EARTH. THEIR INTENTIONS ARE--

ELECT
HONEST
JO, IN
AS
MA

POST
NO-
BELL

THEIR INTENTIONS ARE IRRELEVANT. MY INTENTIONS WERE ONLY TO SURVIVE--AND YOU SAW WHERE THAT GOT MARTINE.

BESIDES, ANY ATTEMPT TO INTERFERE WITH MAN'S OWN DESTINY IS

WHAT?

THAT WALL--!

...COLLAPSING!!

FRANTICALLY, MORBIUS LUNGES FROM THE PATH OF FALLING BRICK, CLUTCHING THE GIRL'S WRIST EVEN AS HE MOVES...

KARASH!

AND FOR A MOMENT IT SEEMS HE HAS SAVED HER...

...UNTIL A GEYSERING PILLAR OF FLAME RUPTURES THE PAVEMENT--

--AND INCINERATES HER SMALL, HELPLESS FORM IN MID-AIR.

PHFT!

PHOTOM!

NOOOO!!

MAIL IT TO MORBIUS

6/MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 575 MADISON AVE. N.Y.C. 10022

Dear Marvel,

"Alone Against Acturus" was another good story by Steve Gerber. The blending of science and sorcery surrounding the Caretakers really makes for a great storyline. Morbius himself, who is the victim of science and horror, is one fascinating character. Morbius' conversation with "I," whatever it is, was ingeniously written. The Caretakers, with each issue, grow more and more interesting. Keep the great writing coming.

I have not seen all that much of Craig Russell's art. What I have seen is some mighty fine work. Especially when he inks his own pencils. Given time, I think he could develop into some artist. Keep Gil Kane doing the fantastic covers.

FEAR is one of my favorite bi-monthlies

Jackie Frost
Rte. 3, Box 176-C
West Monroe, La. 71291

Hoo boy. Not that we don't appreciate your kind comments, Jackie. We do. But we just realized we're going to have to outline all the author/artist switches we've made on this strip—and hence, several others—since your letter was written to fill you in on what's happening with Morbius and FEAR.

Okay (taking a deep breath), here's the scoop.

Steve Gerber plotted this issue—the second-to-last chapter of the long-running Caretakers/Diamond serial—just before it was decided that he would be taking over the DEFENDERS mag. Now, that in itself was no problem, except that our third GIANT SIZE DEFENDERS ish had to be scripted at exactly the same time FEAR was approaching its dreaded deadline doom. So Doug Moench, who will be scripting both the color and black-and-white MORBIUS strips from now on, stepped in to script this issue. And, as a result, he got stuck with the task of plotting the wind-up of the year-long saga, too! (And Steve, who likes surprises, even on his own strips, doesn't know yet how the story ends! But Doug has promised one of the most bizarre climaxes to any tale in a long, long while. So don't miss it.)

Meanwhile, in the art department...

Craig Russell was called away to do, of all things, WAR OF THE WORLDS, and so we found, of all people, Frank Robbins to do this issue and the next of FEAR. From what we understand, though, Frank will be moving on shortly to (are you ready?) CAPTAIN AMERICA, and FEAR #27 will feature the color comics debut of a new and hopefully permanent penciller for the MORBIUS series.

Now, wait—we've only begun to confuse you!

If Frank is taking over Cap's mag, what about Sal Buscema? Well, in addition to his regular chores on the DEFENDERS, Sal will be returning to MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE with ish #7. He'll also be doing layouts on THE AVENGERS. And (surprise!) he'll be taking over the SON OF SATAN strip beginning with MARVEL SPOTLIGHT #20.

But, if Sal's doing SON OF SATAN...what about Gene

Kamen?

Another surprise. Gene will be returning to a mag he's always enjoyed, one he pencilled some years back and which

gained him almost as wide a following as DAREDEVIL. Gene will be handling the art on none other than DR. STRANGE!

Uh. Wait a minute. Speaking of DAREDEVIL...if Steve's going to be writing DEFENDERS, he can't handle DD's mag, too, can he? So Tony Isabella will be scripting DAREDEVIL, as well as IRON FIST, which Doug had to abandon in order to do MORBIUS.

And you people have the gall to wonder why we seem so confused?!!

In any event, getting back to Jackie's letter...thanks, Mr. Frost. From all concerned, Steve and Craig enjoyed their work on the strip, also, and they were hoping Marvel. Altogether would be receptive to what they were trying to accomplish. Despite the confusion, it was clearly evident that most readers did enjoy the issue. And we can only be grateful. (We're too blasted zonked out to be anything else.)

Dear Marvel,

MORBIUS is the only Marvel comic that I actively dislike, because I disapprove of the basic concept—not of Morbius as a character, but of making him the "hero" of a series, the protagonist we're supposed to identify with.

Nobody has the right to consume other people to satisfy his own needs. Morbius' situation is a tragic one, but insofar as he is capable of rational thought and decision-making at all, he has an obligation not to continue it. If he has already tried the obvious things, like using animals or robbing a blood bank, then he has only two choices: (1) to turn himself over to the authorities (in which case he would probably be locked up in a hospital; doctors would experiment on him and try to cure him; they might succeed, but he would more likely die first); or (2) to kill himself. There is no indication that he has any religious objections to suicide. All the evidence is that he is (was?) a positivist-materialist-humanist.

Other characters in similar predicaments—Bruce Banner, Jack Russell—can get on without killing, so I fully sympathize and empathize with their determination to lead their own incredibly messy lives without outside interference. Ted Sallis, the one time he had any choice in the matter, chose to stay the Man-Thing rather than deliberately kill. But Michael Morbius knows he will kill and kill again, and refuses to take any responsibility for the act, apart from sometimes stopping short of the fatal point. As far as I'm concerned, that makes him impossible as a protagonist and possible only as a pitiable villain.

Friell

(no address given)

Dear Marvel,

Regarding Morbius' supposedly guilty conscience and his attitude toward his victims, here is my opinion:

Michael Morbius is a human being, a hideously transformed one, but a human nevertheless. Being human, his drives and emotions well up within him time and again, especially the instinct for survival. Let's not forget, it

STAN LEE'S SOAPBOX

Boyl I was so long-winded last ish, telling you all about our mighty Marvel Calendar and the great new ORIGINS OF MARVEL COMICS, both of which ought to be on sale right about now, as well as our HITLER documentary mag, plus NOSTALGIA ILLUSTRATED, and the TREASURY OF SPIDER-MAN, that I promised Roy and the gang I'd stifle myself a little this time in order to leave them a few paragraphs to tell you about the zillion other wonderments from the hallowed halls of Marvel!

So, in order to give you a breather — and let the Bulpen carry the ball — I'll just take a minute to mention what a great time I had lecturing at the University of New Hampshire recently, and what a kick it was to receive the Popular Culture Association's Award of Excellence a few weeks ago in Milwaukee. You should have seen upwards of two thousand college students, professors, deans, and other dwellers in the rarified atmosphere of academia praising the merit and the miracle of Marveldom! Verily, 'twas a fete to remember! I can hardly tell you what a great source of satisfaction it is to know that, with your help, we've made the art of comic-books widely respected, universally accepted, and avidly acclaimed both here and overseas. Yep, I've gotta admit it — we're a great team, you and your blushin' Bulpen!

And now, unless Iron Man finds a pin-up of Aunt May in Conan's footlocker, I promise to clue you in on what's happening with our latest pulse-pounding project — the feature-length, live action Spider-Man movie now in preparation — the next time we meet!

Excelsior!

Stan

ITEM! We know it's a wee bit late, for those of you who've already picked up on our illfin' lineup of 75¢ and \$1 magazines — and who hasn't? — but we think it'd be best clue you in officially. Ye Editor-in-Chief (that's ROY THOMAS, for you old-timers out there) has formally appointed a couple of new Editors to help him out with our ever-burgeoning titles. First there's the Marverous MARY WOLFGAN, who's being kept busy with DRACULA LIVES, VAMPIRE TALES, and our zesty, yazy CRAZY Mag, while Roy himself keeps his hand in with SAVAGE TALES SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN, and our new science fiction mag, the first issue of which (tentatively titled WORLDS UNKNOWN, Vol. 2, No. 1, last time we looked) should be on sale even as we speak! That leaves TONY "The Tiger" SABELLA axed and abetted by Cheerful CHRIS CLAREMONT to preside over

the bulk (and we do mean bulk!) of black-and-white masterpieces. And wouldn't you know that, with no less than four guys working fulltime, there's still more than the poor guys and our overworked production staff can handle!

ITEM! Let's hear a hearty "Welcome Aboard!" for a contingent of dynamic new artists who hail from the far-off Philippines, and who're adapting by leaps and bounds to the Mighty Marvel style of dramatic storytelling. First, there's Tremendously-Talented TONY deZUNIGA, who's currently earning hordes of new fans illustrating tales of Dracula and the Golem, as well as embellishing the Ka Zar epics in SAVAGE TALES. Next there's Awesome ALFREDO ALCALA already earning kudos in the pages of ZOMBIE, SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN, and elsewhere (Alfredo, believe it or don't, pencils and inks some s-xty pages per month of beautiful, finely-detailed artwork). Thirdly, there's Slamin' SONNY TRINIDAD, whose Morb us and Dracula stories soon will chiv you to the marrow — and then there's Startling STEVE GAN, whose "Brak the Barbarian" sagas in SAVAGE TALES are setting sword-and-sorcery fandom on its collective ear! In addition: there are several other up-and-coming young artists who will soon be thrilling you in the pages of our back-and-white block busters — all presided over, at our Eastern-Hemispheric Branch, by Tony's ever-on' spouse MARY deZUNIGA, who keeps all those pandemonious pages moving across the wide Pacific. They're all knock'ng themselves out, so let them — and us — know how you feel about their efforts in the months to come, okay?

ITEM! Here's a hale and-hearty hello to DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT (hereafter referred to as DAVE), who's piped himself aboard to help Dauntless DON MCGREGOR proofread all our color comics. Not only is Dave a s-c-r-i-p-t-e-r to watch in his own write, as someone once said, but he's also a demon literary agent in his spare time! Don and Dave are backed up, in turn, by Roy's new Person Friday, Impish IRENE VARTANOFF, who's been active in fan circles for years and who's now overseeing our rhapsodic reprints and letters pages (when she isn't working on her Master's Thesis, that is — nobody rests at night among the batty Bulpen!). Like we said — welcome, one and all!

ITEM! It's not all unmitigated good news this month, though. Both DON HECK and GIL KANE's lovely wife ELAINE were in separate auto accidents, from which they're both recuperating (and doing n.e.e.y. we're overjoyed to say). Likewise, Lethal LARRY HAMA burned his fingers slightly in a freak electrical accident at the studio he shares with DICK GORDANO, NEAL ADAMS, RALPH REESE, and others. Dick, Neal, et al, stepped in like troopers to help him finish off the current Iron Fist episode

— for which thanks, both from us and from the legion of kung-fu fans the world over! (Whew! And you wondered why editors get gray hairs!?)

ITEM! Anybody out there catch Big JIM HARMON, West-Coast Editor of our photo-fused MONSTERS OF THE MOVIES mag, on a recent edition of the NBC-TV show "Knowledge" — or else on a certain nationally syndicated news program? It seems that, ever since we hired J.H. to edit the magazine, he's been simultaneously discovered by the media men of the land, as well! (Just keep pluggin' M.O.M. Jim — not that you need any hints from us!)

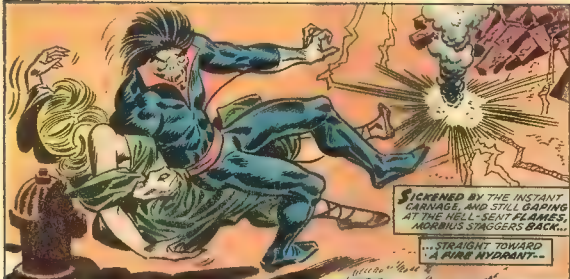
ITEM! Can't rest at sneaking in a plug for our newest (but not nonsense) mag — for those of you who've made CRAZY the toast of the town (mainly, Hoboken, New Jersey). This one's for those of you who like your humor flavored with a touch of the macabre — a hint of the horrible — a pinch of the mysterious. And — are you ready for this? — the name of our new chills-and-chuckles sensation is... ARRGH! (No, Irving, that's not our reaction to it; that's the title: ARRGH! Pick up a copy today — and go ARRGH yourself! "Nuff said!")

Just a last-minute reminder that the MIGHTY MARVEL CALENDAR FOR 1975 is just going on sale in real live book stores from coast to coast! We think you'll find it \$3.95 well-spent (how's that for soft sell?). But, you know muddled-up Marvel: we always have to let a typo or two sneak thru, just to give you something to hunt for. So, we'll offer a shiny new no-prize to the first dozen Calendar purchasers who spot which day of the year is accidentally printed twice (while one day was omitted entirely). No fair finding other boobies, now — you know how insecure we get!

ITEM! That's all we've got room for on this page — but there's an extra item or three on our Bulpen Bonus Page, elsewhere in this issue. We wouldn't want you to think we've been idle now, would we? See you there, Marvelophile!

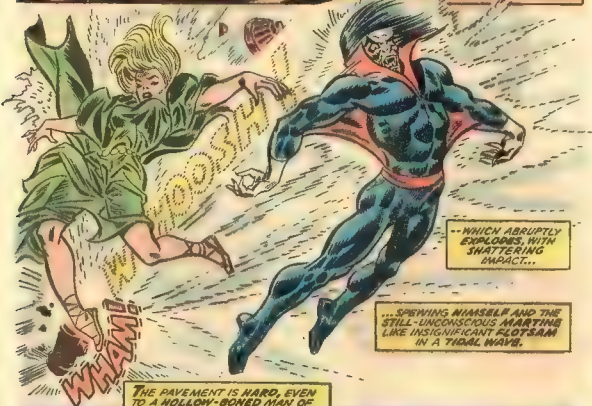
MARVEL COMICS!

WE'RE NUMBER ONE
--BUT WE
STILL
TRY HARDER!



SICKENED BY THE INSTANT CARNAGE, AND STILL GAPING AT THE HELL-SENT FLAMES, MORBIUS STAGGERS BACK...

...STRAIGHT TOWARD A FIRE HYDRANT--



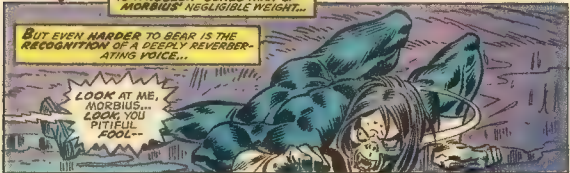
--WHICH ABRUPTLY EXPLODES, WITH SHATTERING IMPACT...

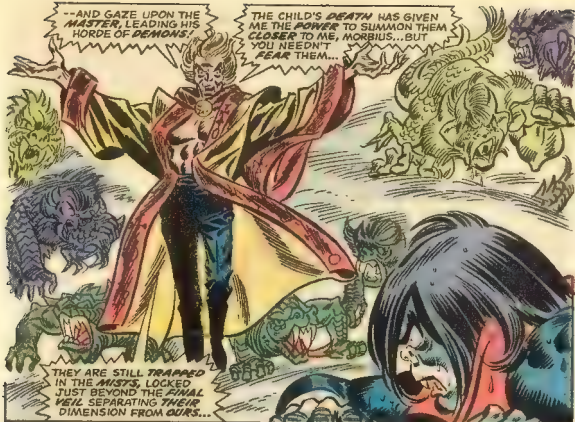
...SPENDING HIMSELF AND THE STILL-UNCONSCIOUS MARTINE LIKE INSIGNIFICANT FLOTSAM IN A TIDAL WAVE.

THE PAVEMENT IS HARD, EVEN TO A HOLLOW-BONED MAN OF MORBIUS' NEGLIGIBLE WEIGHT...

BUT EVEN HARDER TO BEAR IS THE RECOGNITION OF A DEEPLY REVERBERATING VOICE...

LOOK AT ME, MORBIUS... LOOK, YOU PITIFUL FOOL--





--AND GAZE UPON THE MASTER, LEADING HIS HORDE OF DEMONS!

THE CHILD'S DEATH HAS GIVEN ME THE POWER TO SUMMON THEM CLOSER TO ME, MORBIUS...BUT YOU NEEDN'T FEAR THEM...

THEY ARE STILL TRAPPED IN THE MISTS, LOCKED JUST BEYOND THE FINAL VEIL SEPARATING THEIR DIMENSION FROM OURS...



INDEED, YOU NEED NEVER FEAR THEM, MORBIUS--FOR I REQUIRE BUT ONE LAST RELEASE OF LIFE-ENERGY... ONE LAST DEATH TO BRING THE DEMONS TO MY SIDE...



AND YOU SHALL PROVIDE THAT DEATH, MORBIUS!

YOU SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR UNLEASHING THE SWARMING HORDES OF HELL--!!

--AND FOR DAEMON'S NEW ORDER OF LIFE UPON EARTH!!

NEXT **THE CATAclysmic**
ISSUE: CONCLUSION!

the PARASITE
SYNDROME!

THE FACELESS ONES



WE WATCHED THEM COME...THEIR GLEAMING SPACE SHIPS SOARING IN THROUGH THE SMOKE AND HAZE OF THE ENDLESS HORIZON...

CLOSER AND CLOSER! NOW WE COULD HEAR THE POWERFUL BLASTS OF THEIR MOTORS, SEE THE BRIGHT COLORS OF THE SHIPS! AND WE WAITED, CONFUSED AND A LITTLE WORRIED! THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME...



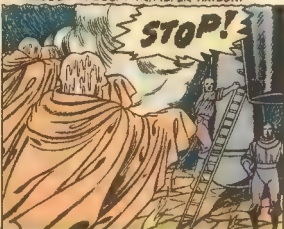
THEY CAME DOWN ON LEVEL 2, THE SHIPS GLIDING SMOOTHLY AND EFFORTLESSLY/ AND ALL WE COULD DO WAS WATCH, FOR WE WERE HELPLESS TO ACT WITHOUT THE COMMAND OF OUR LEADER



THE COMMAND HIT OUR BRAINS ALL AT ONCE AND WE STOPPED IN OUR TRACKS...

WE COULD DO NOTHING, BUT OBBY, NO MATTER HOW WE WERE REVOLUT AT THE SIGHT OF THESE CREATURES!

THEN WE SAW THEM COME OUT... AND WE ALMOST SCREAMED WITH DISGUST AND HORROR AT THE SIGHT OF THEM! WE TENSED FOR THE ATTACK, BUT THE ORDERS FROM OUR LEADER CAME TO US THROUGH THOUGHT TRANSFER WAVES...



OUR LEADER'S WORD WAS LAW!

SO WE OBEYED... BUT WHAT A SIGHT WE SAW... WHAT AN UGLY, REVOLTING SIGHT!



THEIR HEADS WERE THE SAME SHAPE AS OURS... BUT **THEY HAD FACES!** THEIR HEADS HAD UGLY HOLES AND PROTRUDING OBJECTS ON THEM! EYES, MOUTH, NOSES, EARS, THEY CALLED THEM!

WE COULD TELL ALL THIS BECAUSE WE COULD READ THEIR THOUGHTS... WE COULD ALWAYS READ THE THOUGHTS OF THE HUMANS OF EARTH, AS WE COULD THOSE OF OUR LEADER...



BULLPEN BONUS PAGE! (WHAT ELSE?)

JUST ROOM FOR A FEW QUICKIES:

ITEM! Ever wonder why one writer or artist gives up a feature to another? Well, here's a case in point: At almost the same time recently that STEVE (Baby) GERBER got an overwhelming urge to write our DEFENDERS spectacular, it seems that Live-it-up LEN WEIN got a similar itch to script a lone-wolf superhero like DAREDEVIL. The first Ye Editor knew of it was when the pair marched into my office in tandem and said they'd like to trade books for a while; I figured each of 'em would bring a new and infectious enthusiasm to already-popular mags, so I okayed the deal. Ditto with Len and Merry GERRY CONWAY, who're trading writing chores on FANTASTIC FOUR and MARVEL TEAM-UP, mainly so that Ger can handle virtually all of the many Spider-Man pages which are unleashed by the House of Marvel every month. (All, that is, except those which are scripted by an obscure newcomer named JEANIE THOMAS — no relation to Ye Editor, except by marriage — for our nefarious new title, SPIDEY SUPER STORIES, published in conjunction with TV's Electric Company, big brother to Sesame Street!)

ITEM! It's the hit of fandom — in just one earth-shattering issue! Ordinarily, that's the kind of remark we'd be making about a single new title, right? But,

In this case, it's equally true of both of our new one-dollar wonders, PLANET OF THE APES and THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONANI! Already, the artistry of PLOOG, TUSKA, and MOENCH is being hailed by gorillaphiles the world over; already, our swarthy Cimrierian (as interpreted by BUSCEMA, SMITH, and the like) has gained a new Hyborian Legion of enthusiastic admirers! And, with the second issues of these wondrous winners — now on sale — there can no longer be any doubt: It's the Marvel Age of Magazines as well as the Marvel Age of Comics! (And, if you're still nagged by any last, lingering doubts, just sneak a peak at what BUSCEMA and company are doing in SAVAGE TALES — at our steel-fisted DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU title, which is already going monthly by unprecedented popular demand — at our currently-debating science fiction \$1 mag which you've clamored for, long and loud — at our widely-acclaimed adaptation of Bram Stoker's classic novel in DRACULA LIVES — at Satana and at Gabriel, Devil-Hunter, in the pages of HAUNT OF HORROR — and at all the way-out wonderment in mags like ZOMBIE, VAMPIRE TALES, CRAZY, MONSTERS UNLEASHED, MONSTERS OF THE MOVIES, etc., etc., etc. — and maybe you'll get what we're driving at! See you next month, ol' buddy!

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Dept: ALG

STRANGER THAN ANYTHING ELSE, THEY LOOKED AT US WITH REVULSION AS IF *WE* WERE THE UGLY ONES...

PRETTY REVOLTING, EH, JIM? NO FACES!

YEAH, BUT THEY SEEM PEACEFUL ENOUGH!



WHAT THEY DIDN'T KNOW WAS THAT *WE* HAD FACES TOO... BUT THEY WERE HANDSOME FACES EXACTLY LIKE THAT OF OUR LEADER!

IMAGINE...THE FIRST SPACE FLIGHT FROM EARTH, AND WE LAND *HERE*!

YES, BUT WHERE ARE WE?



BUT OUR FACES COULD BE SEEN ONLY UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS, DEEP IN OUR ABOODES WHERE WE ALWAYS WERE! OUT HERE IN THE OPEN WE WERE THE FACELESS ONES!

I DON'T KNOW! MY CALCULATIONS DON'T SHOW ANY PLANETS IN THIS AREA!

WHY WORRY? WE'RE ALIVE AND SAFE!



SO WE OBEYED THE LAW OF OUR LEADER, AND WELCOMED THE VISITORS FROM OUTER SPACE...

WE GOT THROWN OFF OUR COURSE WHEN WE HIT THE HAZE AND SMOKE! LUCKY THE NATIVES ARE FRIENDLY, EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE DISGUSTING-LOOKING WITH-OUT FACES!

THIS ONE WANTS US TO GO WITH HIM!



WE ESCORTED THEM ACROSS THE OUTER LEVELS, PAST THE CRAGS AND SMOKING HOLES! THE HUMANS WERE CHEERFUL AND HAPPY! THEY TALKED AMONG THEMSELVES...

THEY SAID WE WERE FOOLISH TO TRY... BUT WE CAME THROUGH... THE FIRST SPACE SHIP FLIGHT AND A SUCCESSFUL ONE!

MAN HAS COME FAR! SOON WE'LL CONQUER THE UNIVERSE!



WE COULD READ THEIR THOUGHTS, BUT THEY DIDN'T MAKE ANY SENSE TO US!

THEY FOLLOWED US DOWN INTO THE CAVERNS, PAST THE WALLS OF PITCH AND LAVA, DEEP...DEEP...

AND THEY DIDN'T SEEM A BIT WORRIED! THEY WERE BRAVE, THESE HUMANS, EVEN IF THEY WERE STUPID!

HOPE THEY'VE GOT SOMETHING TO EAT! I'M STARVED!

AND THIRSTY!



WONDER WHAT KIND OF A CULTURE THEY'VE GOT HERE?

I'M MAKING NOTES OF EVERYTHING!



WHAT A BOOK I'LL WRITE WHEN WE GET BACK!

WE'LL BE RICH AND FAMOUS!



THE HULK IS CAUGHT— BETWEEN HAMMER AND ANVIL! LEARN WHY— NOW!

NOW WE WERE HOME... BACK WHERE WE BELONGED!

GOOD GRIEF, JIM! LOOK! I CAN SEE THEIR FACES NOW!

NO! NO! NO-O-O-O!



YES, THEY COULD SEE OUR FACES... BY THE LIGHT OF THE GREAT FIRES! THAT WAS THE ONLY TIME OUR FEATURES COULD BE SEEN... BUT THE HUMANS DIDN'T LIKE THEM AT ALL! THEY SCREAMED AND CARRIED ON SOMETHING AWFUL!

THIS ISN'T ANOTHER PLANET!

THIS IS... THIS IS...



WE STOPPED THEIR SCREAMS AND PANIC... STOPPED THEM WITH OUR SPEARS!

SENT THEM HURLING INTO THE RAGING FIRES, THEIR BODIES TWISTING IN AGONY!

FUNNY THAT THEY SHOULD ACT LIKE THIS/IF THEY DIDN'T EXPECT TO BE TREATED THIS WAY, THEN WHY DID THEY COME HERE?



IT WAS STRANGE, OF COURSE! YOU SEE ALL THE OTHERS OF OUR "GUESTS" USUALLY WAIT UNTIL AFTER THEY DIE...

...BEFORE THEY COME TO HADES!



was originally his instinct for survival which led him to conduct the experiment which changed him into a blood-thirsty monstrosity. Being a logical man, Morbius realizes he must feed upon the blood of his fellow humans in order to survive. No matter how much his acquired morals cause him to feel guilty when he kills someone, his inbred survival instinct overrides them.

Mentally, Morbius is still relatively unaccustomed to his new physical state, thus the reason for his haunted conscience. But I feel as time wears on, Morbius will justify his blood-thirst to himself more and more. Sometime in the future, he will become a seemingly insensitive, cold-blooded killer, as opposed to a conscience-ridden one. Of course, this isn't Morbius' fault, since he is a slave to his own inner nature.

Brian Schuck
416 Donbar Drive
Bowling Green, Ohio 43402

Dear Marvel,

There wasn't much to say about FEAR #23, aside from that it was very good, so we'd like to comment on Morbius' character.

Morbius will never truly make it in either the superhero or the supernatural world, but will always mediator between the two. Where a vampire is out of place, a scientific mutant is at home. Where an element of science is a misfit, a vampire is in perfect surroundings.

In his color comics debut, Morbius was a blood-crazed maniacal killer, out for the blood of a certain Web-Spinner. Then, after his breakthrough into the black-and-white field Morbius took on a type of humanity and a sense of regret for what he had to do to live. He made some friends, and people were even polite enough not to stare as he walked among crowds.

Then got too long ago, Morbius took over FEAR with the personality he had obtained in his b&w series. But when he returned on the Spider-Man scene in GIANT-SIZE SUPERHEROES #1, he seemed as he was in the beginning: bloodthirsty, mad, and vengeful!

Tim Fish
R.R. 1
Paint Lick, Ky. 40461

Gordon Abney
R.R. 3, Box 302A
Berea, Ky. 40403

Dear Marvel,

Of course you should have guest-stars in FEAR. Morbius

is unique because he is THE LIVING VAMPIRE, and as such he fits into the universe of your superheroes. I thought the whole point of Morbius was to have a vampire who could battle your superheroes. You're turning him into just another vampire.

And please stop turning him into such a hero! I thought you said the reason you decided to do a MORBIUS book was the terrific reception you got for his appearances in SPIDER-MAN and TEAM-UP. Well, the Morbius you have in FEAR is not the Morbius you had in those other books. Please, let's have some continuity out there! Please!

Richard Nathan
2002 4th St. Apt. #203
Santa Monica, Ca. 90405

It's literally impossible for reasons of space to go into a super-detailed answer to these comments/criticisms now, but we found them so interesting and thought-provoking we felt you folks would like to peruse them and form your own opinions as to the validity of each correspondent's point of view.

We'll squeeze in this thought, though: we don't see Morbius as a hero, exactly. More like the classic man-in-the-middle. He loathes his curse of vampirism, but, short of imprisoning or killing himself—neither of which would be in character for him—there's nothing he can do about it at present. His situation with the Caretakers and Daemond is almost an exact parallel to his own plight. Whichever side wins, he loses.

Food for thought. And you have sixty days to digest it. Be here then for the conclusion of our cosmos-spanning epic, huh?



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